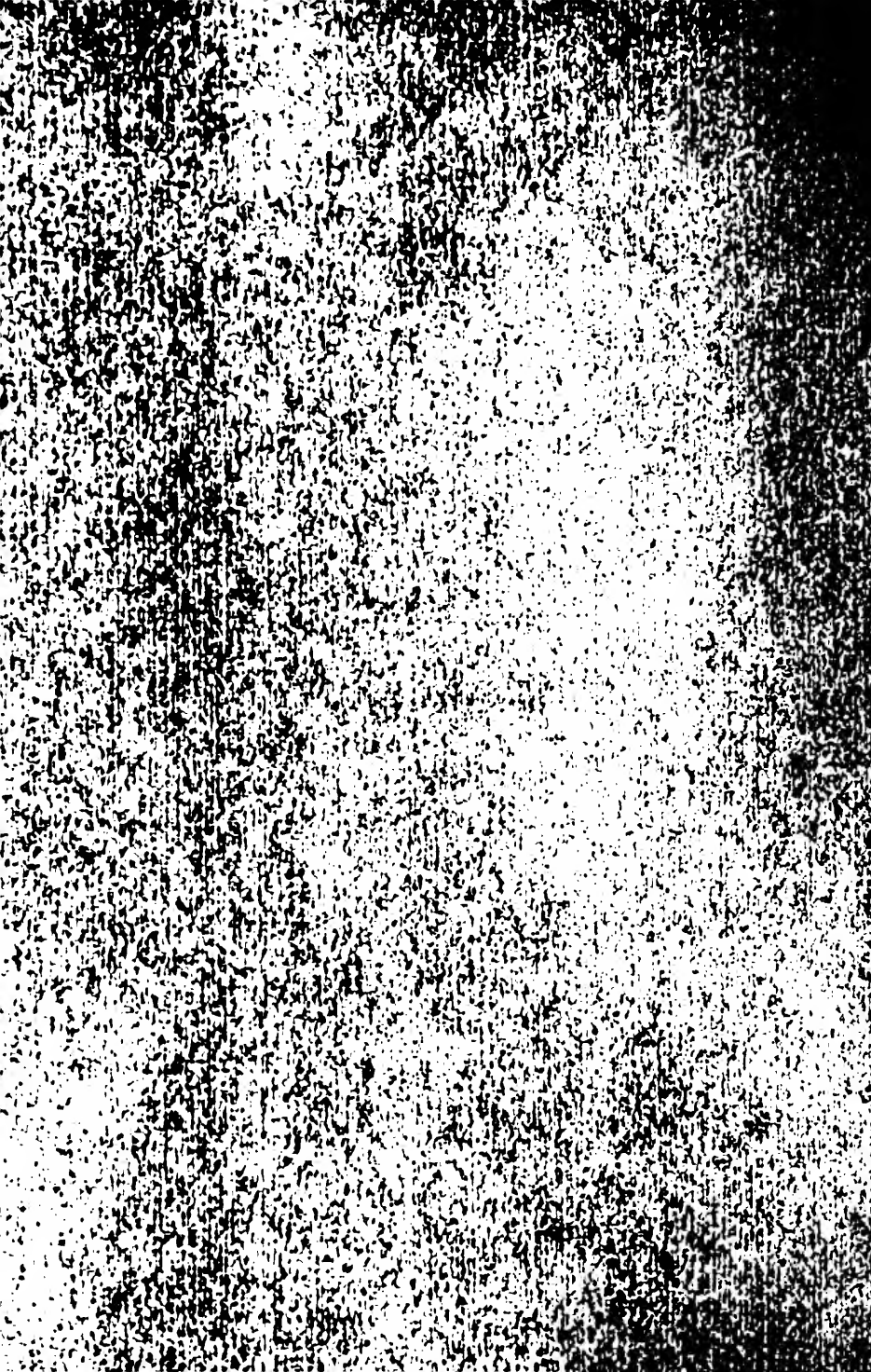


THE EISENHOWER LIBRARY



3 1151 02745 1404



London, 18, Aldermanbury, December 31, 1825

No. 7.

ANTI-SLAVERY MONTHLY REPORTER.

The "ANTI-SLAVERY MONTHLY REPORTER" will be ready for delivery on the last day of every month. Copies will be forwarded, at the request of any Anti-Slavery Society, at the rate of four shillings per hundred. All persons wishing to receive a regular supply are requested to make application to the Secretary, at the Society's office, No. 18, Aldermanbury, and mention the conveyance by which they may be most conveniently sent.

A Meeting of the Members and Friends of the Anti-Slavery Society, was held in Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen-street, on December 21st, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament for the Abolition of Colonial Slavery. The attendance was very numerous and respectable. Mr. Wilberforce was called to the chair, and was received on his appearance with the warm applauses of the Meeting.

The following Report of the Committee was read by Mr. Macaulay.

REPORT.

SINCE the publication of the Second Report of the Society, read in this place on the 30th April last, a large mass of most important information on the subject of Colonial Slavery, has been laid before Parliament. A digest of the most material parts of these parliamentary documents has been published, under the title of the "The Slave Colonies of Great Britain, or a Picture of Negro Slavery drawn by the Colonists themselves." As the pamphlet has been largely circulated, it will not be necessary to enter into a detail of the statements which it contains, or of the fresh horrors which it developes. It has happily admitted us to a near view of the interior of society in one of the slave colonies, Berbice, where the Fiscal had been so attentive to his duty as to preserve some record, though an imperfect one, of the causes of complaint, on the part of the slaves, which came before him. We are not to suppose that the slave system in this colony is marked by features of peculiar atrocity. The presumption, on the contrary, is rather in favour of its comparative lenity, because it is one of the few slave colonies in which the population does not diminish. We have unfortunately no similar disclosures from any of the other colonies. But when we consider what a mass of suffering is laid open to our view in the account which has reached us from this single colony, containing about 23,000 slaves, being scarcely a fortieth part of the whole slave population, how frightfully would that mass have been augmented had we received a similar report of the remaining 800,000! Over *their* sufferings the veil of oblivion has been drawn. Of *them* no record has been preserved. We may imagine, indeed, what they must have been, from the glimpse which has been afforded us in the returns from Berbice; but the full amount of their horrors can now be known only to Him whose eye

mentary investigation. If so, we trust they may lead to the institution of some adequate securities against the effects, on the lives and happiness of the Negro and coloured races, of the blind and irrational alarms, and headstrong and ungovernable passions, of the dominant party, who exclusively act as judges and jurors.

But of all the harsh features of the colonial slave laws, none is more revolting to every feeling of humanity and justice, than that which makes the very act of complaining a crime in the slave. In him, even the murmurs of suffering nature must be suppressed. We may see this lamentable perversion of all established principles of just legislation fully and strikingly illustrated in the recorded proceedings of the Fiscal of Berbice; of whom, at the same time, it is but right to say that he is evidently a person of more than ordinary mildness of disposition.—Four Negroes, belonging to the Hon. Mr Katz, complained to the fiscal of harsh usage by the manager. On the mere denial of the party accused, the Fiscal punished three of the complainants, with seventy-five lashes, and one with fifty.—Again: three Negroes belonging to General Murray, late Governor of Demerara, complained to the fiscal of overwork, and want of food, and severity of treatment. Two of them were selected by the fiscal to receive the torture of seventy-five lashes each.

But it is needless to proceed. Similar instances might be multiplied without end. Nay, the very laws of all the colonies provide that, in the case of a slave complaining of ill-treatment, the magistrate may, if he deems the complaint unfounded, punish the complainant with the cart-whip at his discretion. And yet be it remembered, that as Negro evidence is not admitted in proof of the complaint, the complainant has no possible means, should the accused deny it, of establishing the most undoubted fact.

Since the publication of the abstract to which we have been hitherto referring, another official document, of considerable importance, has been made public; namely, "A Report on the Civil and Criminal Justice of the West Indies," by the only surviving commissioner, Mr. Dwaris, employed to inquire into that subject.

This gentleman, it appears, is the proprietor of a considerable sugar estate in Jamaica, cultivated by about 220 slaves; and although we have no doubt that it was his purpose fairly to represent the case which he was employed to investigate, yet we must lament that it should have been found necessary to select a person in his peculiar circumstances for this delicate and difficult task. It surely never can be expedient to place any public functionary in a situation in which private interests, early prepossessions, and the most cherished associations and attachments, may be found unavoidably to clash with the uncompromising claims of public duty. If his Majesty's Ministers have felt it incumbent on them to determine, that henceforward no governor, or judge, or fiscal, or protector of slaves, shall be the owner of a plantation cultivated by slaves, it surely is still more indispensable that the persons who are expressly delegated to inquire into the abuses of a particular system should not be chosen from the very class whose interests, as well as whose strongest prejudices, are deeply involved in its maintenance. We have been almost involuntarily led to this reflection, by the manifest anxiety which the Report evinces to prevent its exposure

the colony was in the political administration of the West Indies, from the feelings of impressment, due to West-Indian planters, or to that extent of Negro slavery given to us planters, they are naturally susceptible to the same.

The general view of the condition of the Negro slave, which the Commission has in its course gone out of his way to give, is without doubt very different from that which a consideration either of general principles, or of the facts of the case, would permit any disinterested and impartial mind to form. "The poor slave," he says, "is left to himself." But here, in the very outset, we must stop to remark, that "left to himself" is not, we apprehend, a state of ordinary existence in a West-Indian life.

"A slave left to himself" is in fact no slave. — But "left to himself" the Report continues us, "the poor slave is generally contented and happy. Possessing a spot to which he is commonly attached" — we shall naturally see by what tenure he holds this spot — "Possessing a spot to which he is commonly attached, looking to his master — a master, distant, neglected, generally 1000 miles off, whom he never sees, and cannot therefore look to, but," looking to his master for support in health, care in sickness, and advice and help in distress and difficulty, the unpropitiated Negro, far from pining in misery, dances and sleeps, tells his dreams away like thoughtless, careless, and happily ignorant of his own impotent condition and of the impotency of the laws." Thus, he is numbered, not as more immediately to Barbadoes, the very colony where, yet a few years ago, hundreds of Negro lives were sacrificed with unfeeling dispatch, by the operation of laws which the Report represents as only now *beginning* to run us. — "A little more time, and a little less work, turning," adds the Reporter, "the narrow boundary of the wants and wishes of the Negro." And what has reduced the Negro to this "not un-English state of existence: a state which this gentleman considers as sufficient contentment satisfactory contentment?" But, supposing such a portion as this to be realized on the estates of a few, of the colonies, but planters, yet in what respects does it differ from that which might be given, by many an English gentleman, of his stud or his horse, or of his kennel of dogs? The comforts and enjoyments of the Negro, on the showing of this Report, are, like those of the horse and the dog, exclusively of the animal kind. — Are we, then, to shut out of our view that the Negro is a human being, born with the power of looking at, and after; possessing the capacities of thought, intelligence, reflection; that he is endowed with desires, affections, cares, passions, respectabilities, and — may we dare to add — rights, — in common with ourselves? Shall we forget that the poor Negro was formed, like his master, in the image of God; has shared in the same moral ruin; has been redeemed by the same blood; and is an heir of the same immortality? If, then, the delineation of the Reporter were as generally true as it is notoriously the reverse; still, to level the Negro's highest enjoyments, his comfort and even its duration, to depend, like theirs, on the will, the caprice, the prudence, the health, or the life of another; to put it in the power of that other not only to be himself the sole arbiter of the destinies of his slave, the food he shall eat, the clothes he shall

wear, the labour he shall undergo, the stripes he shall receive, the indignities, nay, the tortures, he shall suffer, but even to delegate these tremendous powers to third parties—what is all this but a cruel spoliation of man's inalienable rights; an impious usurpation, for which nothing can compensate; an insult to the Majesty of Heaven itself?

Some idea of the wretched insecurity of the tenure, by which slaves enjoy even the spot to which the Report tells us they are attached, together with all the dearest ties and charities of life, may be obtained from the case of a Mr. Padmore, who was driven to the necessity (a necessity of common occurrence in the West Indies) of selling his estate to satisfy his creditors. "The slaves," it is stated, "he *could* have sold separately (detached from the estate), at a much higher rate; but they came to him in a body, with most distressing cries, and threw themselves on the ground before him; when a spokesman, appointed by the rest, fell down at his feet, and implored him, in all their names, not to separate them, both from himself and the estate. They were ready to follow him to the other end of the island; but if he could not retain them about himself, if his necessities compelled him to sell them, they besought him not to part friends and relations, husbands and wives, parents and children; not to tear them from their houses and gardens; but to let them go with the land. He could not resist such an appeal, and he lost at least forty pounds a-head by it." (p. 22.) This occurrence says much, it is true, for the ruined individual who had the courage and the feeling to make this sacrifice;—but what does it say for the system? for that state of society, that state of law, which can for one moment tolerate and sanction such enormities? Even Mr. Dwaris admits, that, by the law of Barbadoes, there is no express direction that families should be sold together; nothing in any Act prohibiting the separation of husband and wife, parents and children. He endeavours, however, to palliate the effect of this statement, by remarking, that many of our other islands had adopted, with the best effect, a humane provision to prevent the separation of families. In venturing to make this statement, in which, however, we believe him to be mistaken, he ought at least to have named the islands in which such a provision had been adopted; especially as, in the case of the only two other islands, Tobago and Grenada, whose laws he speaks of, he himself distinctly tells us that, "unattached slaves are ordered to be sold one by one, except mother and child under twelve years of age." (pp. 81 and 103.) We find him, indeed, even becoming the apologist of the general principle of separating the slaves from the land, which destroys, root and branch, even that miserable semblance of property which a slave can be said to possess in his house and garden. "However desirable it may appear," he observes, "to prevent the slave from being torn from his home and garden, it would be found very difficult, *consistently with a due regard to the interest of creditors,*" (the paramount consideration, of course, in the minds of colonial legislators,) "to provide any remedy for the evil." It would be unsuitable to a state of things in which the support of credit, and the security for borrowed capital, form the *first* object of attention, and even of legislative care and provision." The first objects of attention, therefore, are, not human life and human comfort—at least in cases where the skin hap-

shifts with the case. A disposition to favour, where it exists" (and the Reporter might have added, a disposition to condemn), "receive no check for want of publicity. There being no assigned place or appointed time for the execution of slave malefactors, the wretched convict, *as soon as sentence is passed, is fastened to the nearest tree*; unless, which frequently happens, the owner of the soil is at hand to prevent it. In such case, *the miserable culprit is dragged from tree to tree, from estate to estate*; and in one case, of then recent occurrence, the constable was at last forced to throw the exhausted sufferer off the town bridge, securing the rope by a lamp-post.

Is it necessary to add a single word more to these sickening statements? Yet we cannot forbear touching upon another subject. After the eulogy pronounced by Mr. Dwaris on the general treatment of the slaves in Barbadoes, the Meeting will scarcely be prepared for the following representations of the same gentleman in the very same Report. "Slaves in this island," he says, "are without legal protection or redress for personal injuries.".... "The slave has no remedy, in case of the greatest oppression by the master or his delegate, or the grossest injury by third persons; though the *master* (in case of his slave being assaulted and robbed) may have reparation in damages for *the loss of service, or the injury to his property, in the slave*. The murder of a slave, *wilfully, maliciously, wantonly, and without provocation*, is now a capital crime. But there is no other legislative provision, restraining the absolute power of the master over the slave, or inflicting punishment upon the owners or others, in cases of mayem, mutilation, dismemberment, or cruel treatment. No other act of Assembly has been framed for the protection of slaves; no tribunal is specially appointed for inquiry into their wrongs. A slave who is, or thinks himself, aggrieved, looks in vain, in this island, for a proper quarter in which to prefer his complaint. *It can no where be received. Murder is the only case in which the law interferes.*" "For the punishment of general oppression and maltreatment of a slave, there is no provision by any law of Barbadoes. If inflicted by the master, it would be *dispunishable*. If perpetrated by a third person, the *owner* would have his remedy by civil action; but the slave would still be without redress." "There is not, in Barbadoes, any law regulating the quantum and kind of punishment, the hours of labour and rest, the provision of food, and (except nominally) of clothing. These are dependant on the performance of moral duties, of which good men feel the obligation, but of which the breach is not cognizable before any earthly tribunal. A wicked and cruel master or delegate (so that he do not kill a slave) may inflict on him ANY degree of severity of punishment. *No man, or set of men, has legal power to call him to account for working his slave as long as he likes; for whipping him as much as he pleases; for chaining, for starving him.*" "A master has uncontrolled, *undefined, and absolute power.*" Where then, asks Mr. Dwaris, very justly, however inconsistently, "where then is the protection of the slave, and where, in case of accident, the justification of the master?" "In a case even of a very grievous bodily injury, inflicted upon a slave by a manager, the sufferer himself, or his slave brethren who were present, could not give evidence, even though all the free persons on the premises

to have been a high way, straight at the way. In such a case, a
 moment of reflection would have saved Mr. Milled, *might he have said*,
 "I am not a lawyer, but I am Mr. Davaris, the most aggravated
 slaveholder in the island, and my tongue permitted to tell his
 story. I am now willing to speak for him here, if they do not
 wish to hear him."—

But to proceed: "It is generally held," says the Report, "as a
 principle of law, that slaves cannot acquire property, except
 by gift or purchase from their masters. By law they cannot, but only by indul-
 gence of the public. Again, the slave has not any means of acquiring
 property without the consent of the master. There is no redemption
 of the slave in this island by force of law," nor in Tobago and Gren-
 ada, "and in any of the islands," and "every negro is presumed
 to be a slave, unless he can legally prove the contrary."

But the same effect is the view given of the legal rights of
 slaves in Tobago and Grenada. In the former island, the chief justice,
 Mr. Pitt Rivers is told us: "A magistrate sent all free persons out of
 the way, and gave a Negro a *whipping*. The Negro was brought,
 without much delay, to us, the sitting magistrates.
 We were anxious to prove it. I proposed a bill to admit slave evi-
 dence, to make the accused put it on oath. The bill was
 opposed." The testimony of the attorney-general of Tobago is to
 the same effect: "I have," he says, "*as a magistrate, cases at ex-
 ception, in which I myself have asked for a bill of slave evidence.*"
*It is a common case, when they wish to be free, to send free persons
 to the law. I have seen many such cases. I think it a very
 bad source of discontent among the slaves, that, when they have
 been brought before me, and bring their fellow-slaves as evidence, such witnesses
 are not allowed to speak. They go away with a feeling of injustice." The
 chief justice of Grenada has since expressed an opinion that by the *new*
 law, "the power of the master has been limited in almost every
 respect, to the well-being and comfort of the slave." This opi-
 nion may show how easily some men may be satisfied with the show
 of reform. Lord Bathurst wisely disallowed the very act which the
 Attorney-general thus commends.*

The Report of Grenada, though varying in a few points, is not
 materially different from that from Tobago. Some of the Grenada laws
 are especially harsh, and even manifest what may be properly called a
 wantonness of severity. And as for the appointment of guardians of
 the person, of which we have heard so loud a boast, it is admitted by the
 present Report to be inefficient. "No independent men, we are ex-
 pressly told, can be found to fill the situation, but it is filled by over-
 sours or managers, who cannot be expected to denounce their employ-
 ers; and in all cases between Black or Coloured persons and whites,"
 observes the Attorney-general, "the prejudice of juries is very strong in
 favour of Whites."

Neither in Tobago, nor in Grenada, "are there any public institu-
 tions, by which infant or adult slaves are instructed in religious prin-
 ciples or useful knowledge. There are no Sunday-schools." The Wes-
 leyan Methodists alone have given any instruction to the slaves of these
 islands. In Barbadoes, only one school is said to exist for Black or

Coloured children, though the Black and Coloured population is about 90,000.

Such are some of the material *facts* brought to light, in the most authentic form, by this recent Report; in which, however, we must admit that many *opinions* are expressed which are exceedingly difficult to reconcile with those facts, or, indeed, with the notorious realities of the case. Take an example:---Mr. Dwaris states it to be the *only just ground of complaint against the present inhabitants of Barbados*, that they had not repealed a certain act, which inflicts the punishment of slitting the nose, and burning the face with a hot iron on a *Negro* who strikes a *Christian* a second time. But when Mr. Dwaris thus sweepingly cleared the Barbadians from every other charge, had he not heard of the atrocities of 1804, reported by Lord Seaforth?---of the wholesale massacres of slaves in 1816?---of the destruction of the Methodist chapel, and the expulsion of the Missionary in 1823? or of their new slave law of 1824? And is it not by this very gentleman, whose report of the Barbadoes slave courts, and of the summary and brutal executions of their convicts, and of the unprotected state of the whole slave population, we have just been sickened? How are we to explain such strange incongruities as these?

But it would require far too detailed a statement, were we to go through all the inconsistencies and incorrectnesses which might be pointed out in this, in some respects, invaluable Report. On the whole, however, we are extremely thankful for its appearance, and we cannot doubt that it will do much to open the eyes of the public to the multiplied abominations of this unchristian and merciless system.

Never, however, let the people of England forget, that of this unchristian and merciless system they will continue to be the criminal upholders, if they now refrain from lifting up their voice against it; or if they silently acquiesce in contributing, as they now do, largely and directly to its support. On this part of the subject, however, we mean not now to enlarge. In the Second Report of the Society, the question of bounties and protecting duties was amply discussed; and not only their impolicy, but their malign and wasting influence on the happiness and increase of the slave population, as well as their pernicious effects even on the interests of the masters, were fully and, as we believe, most incontrovertibly established. We will therefore now content ourselves with remarking, that it is absolutely vain for us to be hoping to succeed in abolishing slavery; or to expect that by the vehemence of our speeches, or by the strength of our resolutions, or even by the severity of our enactments, we shall be able very materially to abate this evil, if we continue, as we now do, to extend to the slave-holder those solid marks of our favour which are conveyed to him in bounties and protecting duties; thus supplying to him the very means of maintaining his iniquitous system, against the united wishes of the parliament and the people of England.

And now, after the statement which has just been given, combined with all our previous information, are we not entitled to call upon the people of England to come forward to strengthen the hands of the government, in the righteous work of carrying into effect the hitherto abortive resolutions of Parliament on the subject of Colonial Slavery?

The present meeting, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament, has, we are also happy to say, been anticipated in several places, by the impulse of that popular feeling which furnishes the best pledge of our ultimate success. In this important line of service Norfolk has taken the lead, and has been followed by the city of Norwich, by Birmingham, by Hull, by Beverley, and by Derby; as it had been preceded, though not for the express purpose of petitioning, by Edinburgh. In all these places our cause has been advocated with remarkable power and effect, and has happily united the general suffrage. The Corporation of the City of London has signalized itself by its zeal in the same cause, and we are anxious to record the high sense we entertain of the advantage which has accrued to it from the nearly unanimous and energetic declaration of the chief authorities of the first commercial city in the world, against the principle of colonial monopoly, and in favour of the claims of injured and outraged humanity. The influence of their high example will, we trust, induce the mercantile and manufacturing classes, throughout the kingdom, to come forward to vindicate the commercial character of this country from the discredit, and its commercial interests from the injury, caused by the prolongation of the existing colonial evils.

It would be ingratitude in this connexion to withhold our warm acknowledgments of the great services which have been rendered to our common cause, since we last met, by the able, zealous, indefatigable, and successful efforts of Mr. Cropper of Liverpool.

These various indications of the general sympathy in our labours are strong incentives to perseverance. And we must all feel it as not among the least cheering and encouraging circumstances, which we are called to acknowledge with gratitude to the Giver of all good, that we should once more behold among us, and in the chair of this assembly, that loved and revered individual, dear to all to whom the interests of humanity are dear; who, having consecrated the strength and flower of his days to the vindication of the wronged and degraded African, and having at length signally triumphed in his long and painful conflict; now, though bending under the weight of added years, still marshals our way, as we trust, to victory, in a no less arduous struggle—in the endeavour to break the yoke of the oppressor, and to achieve the rescue of the oppressed, in every corner of the British dominions. May it please God to spare him to witness the final consummation of this labour of love and mercy!

The Petition founded upon the Resolutions, and agreed to unanimously by the Meeting, is as follows:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of London and its vicinity Humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioners, while they express their sincere and grateful approbation of the Resolutions which have been adopted by Parliament on the subject of Colonial Slavery, and of the efforts which have since been made by His Majesty's Ministers to carry them into effect,—lament that those efforts

which has been almost wholly frustrated by the determined opposition of the Crown, the Admiralty, the War Office, the Treasury, the Government, the Parliament, and the People of this Country.

That your Petitioners could not with deep regret, from the official documents and reports which have been presented to Parliament, that the Colonial Legislatures have contradicted the recorded wishes of the Legislature, and that the Colonies have manifested the same determined opposition to the wishes of His Majesty's Government with the most determined opposition, that the American Colonies and their Slave Codes manifest the same substantial disregard of the sacred principles of Justice, which characterized their old maxims, as that the existing Laws, which, in their practical operation, evidently afford no real protection to the Slaves, have been made, as your Petitioners have already on a few recent occasions, an instrument of the most grievous oppression, cruelty, and oppression, and that the general treatment of the slave population continues to exhibit the same harsh and disgusting effects of the cruelties and oppression prevailing in the colonies, which first excited the indignant feelings of the British public, and which now call for universal commiseration and reformation.

That it appears to your Petitioners that this unjust and immoral system, as it exists in the British Colonies, derives at this moment great support from those commercial regulations, which by means of bounties and protecting duties, favour the produce of Slave Labour, not only materially enhance its price to the British consumer, but augment the misery of the Slaves, and render their reformation more difficult.

That since your Petitioners be called upon by Parliament to contribute at least a large sum for the purpose of extinguishing Slavery, as they now pay for its support, they will cheerfully meet the call; but that they entertain important objections to the continuance of the existing restrictions on the commerce of the Country in favour of Slave grown produce, because while those restrictions violate the recognized principles of sound commercial policy, and impose on the nation a heavy pecuniary burden for the maintenance of Slavery, they tend to counteract the hope of its reformation, they even serve to aggravate and perpetuate its evils, and they involve the people of this Country, still more deeply in the guilt of upholding it.

That all these grounds your Petitioners humbly, but earnestly, implore your Honourable House to take the premises into your early consideration, and to adopt such measures as to your wisdom shall seem meet, for effecting the great work of Colonial reformation and, in accordance with the resolutions of Parliament, and with the wishes and prayers of the nation at large, for bringing the state of slavery itself to the earliest, safe, and practicable termination, in every part of His Majesty's Dominions.

And your Petitioners

will ever pray.

Yes, and all the contributions of the Society, may be had at their office 18, Abchurch-lane, or at Messrs. Hatchards, 187, Piccadilly, and Vach's, Cornhill. It may also be procured through any bookseller, or at the depots of the Anti-Slavery Society throughout the Kingdom.

